



Aruban sommeliers learn from the experts at the 3rd Annual Wine, Food & Art Festival

The three-day festival at the Westin Aruba Resort is always a revelation for all that attend, be they islanders, vacationers, or professionals in the food and beverage industry. Friday's day session in the Palm Beach Ballroom was devoted to educating Aruba's food service personnel employed by the hotels and many fine restaurants on the island. F & B managers saw to it that industry professionals from the loftiest to the lowest position learned from the wine experts attending the festivals the fine points of wine and food pairing.

Patrick Burke of Service Innovations has been at every festival, representing the many fine vineyards of California, Washington, and Oregon that distribute wine in Aruba through Aruba Trading Company. His sessions were well attended, as he explained such complex concepts as "viscosity" and "life cycles" of the grape, making it easy for industry professionals to understand the fine and complex art that is winemaking.

Extolling the virtues of Argentine wine was visiting expert Roberto Ammirata, who also represents a number of vintners from the Medosa region of Argentina, where they grow the finest grapes. Jorge Curiel, Director of Wine and Spirits for ATC made sure there was a proper sampling available of cheeses and alternative snacks that allow tasters to experience the complex interaction between wine and food, and the manner in which each enhances the taste of the other. Patrick Burke expressed that the wine industry is booming, and it is rapidly becoming the most popular beverage to order when dining out or enjoying some good company. "This is a good thing; the public wants to become educated," states Patrick, "they are not drinking to get drunk, they are experiencing and savoring the finer things in life, that is what wine is all about."

An unusual presentation by Pepia Est featured Mount Gay Rum from Barbados, with area manager Ruth Holder attending to present the book "Infusion!," which is enlightening in the various applications for rum in cooking. Pepia Est representative Pascal Turpijn explained that the company was offering this alternative "because everyone is becoming so familiar with wines, we wanted to do something different." Pepia Est experts felt that the Mount Gay Extra Aged would make a perfect accompaniment to the chocolate specialties that would be offered on Friday evening, and served in small brandy snifters, the heady bouquet made the rum as tempting as a sweet dessert.

The pros at Romar Trading, Playa Liquors and Arion Wine all had busy mornings as they extolled the virtues of their various vintages, advising industry professionals as to how best serve their customers in their wine choices. Each year, new vineyards are bringing their wines to Aruba where literally thousands dine out daily, and the Wine, Food and Art Festival contributes to making sure that servers have the expertise to make dinner in Aruba an optimal experience by properly pairing food and wine.